



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October 20, 2005

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961-9316

FEMA INSPECTOR IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF RECEIVING BRIBES AFTER HURRICANE FRANCES

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and Donald J. Balberchak, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, Miami Field Office, and Enrique Gutierrez, Inspector in Charge, United States Postal Inspection Service, Miami Division, announced today the arrest of a former Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) inspector in Miami-Dade County.

The inspector is charged with inflating applicants' claims for disaster relief from FEMA in exchange for kickbacks. On October 18, 2005, a federal grand jury Indicted defendant, **Tywanishia Preston**, with multiple counts of receipt of bribes by a public official, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(2)(c); and making false, fictitious, and fraudulent claims, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 287. If convicted, Preston faces maximum statutory sentence of fifteen (15) years' imprisonment as to each receipt of bribes by a public official count, and maximum statutory sentence of five (5) years' imprisonment as to each count of making false, fictitious and fraudulent claims. Arraignment is set for October 27, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. before Magistrate Judge O'Sullivan.

FEMA was responsible for providing assistance to individuals in an area that was declared a major disaster. FEMA was authorized to provide disaster assistance in the State of Florida to eligible victims of Hurricane Frances, which made landfall on September 5, 2004, near Sewall's Point, Martin County, Florida. FEMA's Individuals and Households Program was a program that provided, among other things, financial assistance to individuals who suffered property losses and damage resulting from Hurricane Frances, which had been declared a major disaster.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and United States Postal Inspection Service. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Susan Osborne of the Major Crimes Section.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.